

# Travel to the Rio Olympics

*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Brad Myers] Hi, I'm Brad Myers, and this is *CDC Elevator Chat*, the program where we ask the questions you would like to ask if you ever found yourself on an elevator with a CDC scientist. With me today is Senia Wilkins, from CDC's Division of Global Migration and Quarantine. Senia, welcome, thanks for joining us.

[Senia Wilkins] Thanks for the invitation. I'm glad this isn't on an escalator or it would be really short.

[Brad Myers] Right, and this way you don't have to worry about getting your shoelaces caught.

[Brad Myers] So, tell me about your work related to the Rio Olympics.

[Senia Wilkins] These Olympics present a special situation, so we're sharing information with travelers and their doctors.

[Brad Myers] What makes this a special travel situation?

[Senia Wilkins] Rio de Janeiro, famous for its carnivals, music, and beaches, is one of the regions of the world facing an outbreak of the Zika virus.

[Brad Myers] And so this has raised fears here and around the world regarding its potential impact on athletes and visitors?

[Senia Wilkins] That's right, but travelers can take steps to help prevent Zika. First and most important, because Zika can cause birth defects, pregnant women should *not* travel to Brazil. All travelers should protect themselves from mosquitoes as part of their daily routine. They should use insect repellent and also wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants.

[Brad Myers] Along with protecting themselves from mosquito bites, what else can travelers do to help prevent Zika?

[Senia Wilkins] Because Zika can also be sexually transmitted, travelers should use condoms if they have sex. Travelers whose partners are pregnant should use condoms or not have sex during the pregnancy, even after they return from Rio.

[Brad Myers] Besides Zika and looking awkward if you don't know how to samba, are there other risks for travelers to Brazil?

[Senia Wilkins] There are other mosquito-transmitted diseases in Brazil, such as dengue and chikungunya. Travelers can also protect themselves from these diseases by avoiding mosquito bites. Some diseases spread through contaminated food and water, so travelers should stick to bottled water and food that is cooked and served hot.

[Brad Myers] That's good to know.

[Senia Wilkins] And here's something else travelers should know. To get help in a medical emergency in Rio, they have to call 192, not 911 like in the U.S. So travelers should program the 192 emergency number into their phones.

[Brad Myers] Somebody has got to tell Siri that.

[Senia Wilkins] Yes, they do.

[Brad Myers] What other steps should travelers take before leaving for Brazil?

[Senia Wilkins] They should be sure they're up-to-date on their routine vaccines. Anyone who isn't 100 percent sure should visit a doctor before their trip. They should also check the CDC website to see whether they need travel-related vaccines or medications for malaria. Travelers should also check their health insurance to see if it covers them overseas. If not, I would suggest they consider purchasing travel medical insurance.

[Brad Myers] OK. We've talked about what to do before travelers get to the games and while they're travelling in Rio. Anything to keep in mind when they get back?

[Senia Wilkins] Sure. All travelers can take steps to prevent spreading Zika when they get back to the United States. They need to continue to prevent mosquito bites for three weeks after returning home and continue to prevent possible sexual transmission.

[Brad Myers] Right. Mosquitos bad, preventing bites good. Anything else you'd like to add?

[Senia Wilkins] One last point. Travelers should know that in large crowds, like they'll encounter at the Rio Olympics, it's especially important to practice basic healthy habits—wash hands frequently or use hand sanitizer; cough and sneeze into a tissue or their sleeve, not their hand; always know where the emergency exits are; and use sunscreen and then apply insect repellent on top.

[Brad Myers] Where can travelers go for more information about protecting their health while travelling to the Rio Olympics?

[Senia Wilkins] You know, we have a lot more information on the Travelers' Health website at [CDC.gov/travel](http://CDC.gov/travel).

[Brad Myers] Finally, we ask two standard questions of all of our passengers. First, why did you get into public health?

[Senia Wilkins] I love working in this field because for many people, a trip overseas is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Our program works to make sure that travelers stay healthy and safe and

have nothing but great memories from their trip, and that's a really important and meaningful goal for me.

[Brad Myers] Second, what will you be talking about this week with your colleagues over lunch?

[Senia Wilkins] Well, we'll probably talk about the latest news about Zika that we'll post on our website, with special focus on the Olympics. We created a lot of materials that people can find in the 2016 Rio Olympics feature on the CDC website. Or we might talk about the cool bossa nova or samba music we're hearing in ads for the Olympics.

[Brad Myers] Great. Got time for a shameless plug?

[Senia Wilkins] Sure—visit the CDC website before any trip overseas. If you missed my earlier shameless plug, the address is [CDC.gov/travel](http://CDC.gov/travel).

[Brad Myers] Senia Wilkins, Health Communications Specialist at CDC, thanks for riding with us.

If you want to find out more about the Zika virus, what else CDC is working on 24-7, or nerdy facts about public health to impress your guests or have them reach for the hand sanitizer at your Olympics watching parties, go to [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO. See you next time.

*[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.*